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## Minister sentenced to 20 years in sex case: Cobb preacher pleads guilty to molesting child

**BYLINE:** By Mark Curriden Staff writer

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A Cobb County minister pleaded guilty Tuesday to child molestation and cruelty charges and was sentenced to 20 years in prison for having sex with a 11-year-old girl who attended his church's vacation Bible school.

The Rev. James Calvin McCurry, 38, a former **pastor** at the Greater Zion Hills Baptist Church in Smyrna, had been charged with forcing the girl to have sex three times in 1985 and 1986.

"The little girl didn't tell anyone about it for three years, when she told an elementary school counselor," said Cobb prosecutor Bruce Hornbuckle. "[McCurry] told her, 'God will get you if you tell.' He also told her God would punish her and her family if she didn't take her clothes off and do what he said."

According to court documents, McCurry confessed to police that he had sexual intercourse with the child two times, but said the girl had "enticed" him.

McCurry said the 11-year-old was at his house visiting his daughter when he walked into his bedroom to find the child on his bed wearing only an open robe.

The minister said the girl told him she was 15 and wanted him to touch her.

"He said he tried to leave the room but he was too weak and touched the girl between the legs," say court records of police interviews with McCurry.

The court documents also indicate McCurry confessed to having sex with the girl in September 1985 on the couch in the **pastor's** study in the church.

"The final time was in 1986, when they had all been to a church skating party," Mr. Hornbuckle said. "He took the girl to his apartment while his wife wasn't there. He admits to having sex there.

"He said he knew child molestation was a crime but he repented after the acts," the prosecutor said. "He said he had mentioned the acts to no one but God."

Mr. Hornbuckle said the 20-year prison sentence means McCurry will

spend between 20 months and six years in prison.

"A preacher is a pretty good risk for the parole board, so he'll probably be let out as soon as possible," Mr. Hornbuckle said.

McCurry is the second Baptist minister in Cobb convicted of child molestation in the past year. The Rev. Thomas McGowan, 46, was sentenced to three years in prison on Nov. 10 for **◀molesting▶** two teenage girls and sexually assaulting an adult member of his congregation at the Morning View Baptist Church in Marietta.

photo: mug of James Calvin McCurry



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